

Mixed Use

Certain locations in the City call for a flexible land use category that will support development with a mixture of appropriate uses. The Mixed Use category supports a combination of commercial, residential and institutional development to be tailored to specific site conditions and transition needs. The “centers” along Fairfax Boulevard (Kamp Washington, Northfax, and Fairfax Circle) are designated as mixed use, which is reflective of the Fairfax Boulevard Master Plan effort and other previous plans and studies. In addition, much of Old Town Fairfax and its immediate surroundings are designated for mixed use development. The commercial uses generally include retail, office, and hotel, but could include others if those uses are logical components of the overall development. Residential uses are generally acceptable, but the intensity of residential uses should be moderated in areas where lower intensity development provides an appropriate transition, such as in portions of Old Town Fairfax for example. In addition, residential uses should not be the dominate ground-floor use within any of the mixed use districts. Any institutional uses integrated into a mixed use development should only include those with a high level of daily activity and general public appeal. Open space that provides uninterrupted pedestrian connections within the mixed use area and to adjacent areas, and can accommodate public gathering should be integrated within the project(s). Uses, or features of uses, that directly further a City goal or objective, such as those identified in this or other chapters of this Plan, should be encouraged and provided reasonable flexibility to achieve that goal or objective.

Mixed use projects (or developments) are planned and cohesive. These characteristics are central to the concept of mixed use, as a project itself may include one building or multiple buildings. Because a mixed use environment can be delivered in these various forms, uses that are mutually supportive and physically integrated must be present. The type of uses and physical environment proposed within a mixed use project distinguishes it from a development with multiple uses that are neither related, nor benefit from being located near one another. Multiple use projects could be appropriate for certain areas within the City, but shouldn't be encouraged in areas specifically designated for Mixed Use.

The types of uses and phasing of the project should acknowledge market conditions, but the mix of uses must nevertheless be mutually supportive and not haphazard. For smaller sites, or those in which a planned mix of uses among multiple buildings isn't otherwise feasible, a vertical mix of uses within a single structure is preferred. For larger development sites, mixed use structures are still preferred, but single-use structures may be appropriate as long as the

overall project adheres to the characteristics described in this section. In addition, the first phase of the development creates its image; therefore, the first phase of any phased development should include the preferred primary uses (described at the end of this chapter for each area designated as Mixed Use) or provisions should be put in place to ensure delivery of those uses within a specified schedule.

Areas of the City designated mixed use are found to be similar to designated growth areas and meet the intent of the Code of Virginia, section §15.2-2223.1. For the areas of the City where a mixed-use designation is proposed, the specific site considerations are discussed in further detail at the end of the chapter.

Transitional

This category is established to recognize specific areas, generally along arterial corridors, that provide a transition between office and commercial uses and less densely developed residential areas. These parcels may be suited to either commercial or residential development depending on the site-specific development potential and impacts on surrounding land uses. Where commercial use is chosen, the plan calls for low profile, small-scale office development with a floor area ratio (FAR) of up to 0.35. The small office buildings and generous landscaping and screening that are characteristic of this category are intended to result in suitable transitions between existing residential uses and more intensive uses or arterial streets. Where residential use is chosen, the plan calls for small infill single-family residential developments at densities approaching the midpoint of the medium density residential category.

Institutional

This category includes the public and quasi-public uses in the City, such as City-owned buildings, school grounds and churches. The lands supporting most of the existing facilities of this type in the City are shown on the plan. Some such facilities exist in locations where the plan calls for a different future use.

Future Land Use

The following principles of land use, designed to achieve an optimum balance in the future land use mix, are reflected in the goals and objectives of the Comprehensive Plan:

- Preserve and develop a unique sense of place
- Promote economic development
- Preserve and enhance existing residential neighborhoods and commercial centers

- Preserve and enhance the quality of the City's physical environment
- Accommodate and coordinate transportation links and improvements, including an emphasis on pedestrian access and usability
- Encourage concentrated and unified development of future projects
- Provide guidance for quality infill projects
- Encourage redevelopment of nonconforming properties
- Establish transition zones between commercial and low density residential uses

The capacity and functionality of the City's infrastructure are of critical importance to future land use. This infrastructure includes the vehicular and pedestrian transportation network as well as elements such as lighting, parks, public signage and storm water management facilities. Both the Land Use Plan and Transportation Plan recognize that economic development opportunities, market preferences, development costs, and physical and environmental constraints contribute to the patterns of change that will occur in the City.

This Plan is intended to serve as a guide to future development and redevelopment of both large tracts of land and small infill sites. It identifies business corridors and focal areas, gateways and transition areas while emphasizing pedestrian access and usability and while seeking to reinforce the distinctive identity of Old Town Fairfax. The Plan respects neighborhoods, both old and new, and business centers as critically important land uses. It highlights Fairfax Boulevard as the City's primary business corridor and identifies opportunities for future development and redevelopment of both commercial and residential areas. Finally, it recognizes the need for the City to carefully consider the relationship between transportation plans and policies, land use plans and policies, fiscal incentives, infrastructure improvements and efficient, viable, attractive land uses.

The desired future land use of the City is illustrated on the Future Land Use Map (see foldout Map). A broad description of the general features of that map is presented below:

- Low Density and Low-Medium Density Residential will continue to be the predominant land use categories, primarily recognizing existing residential neighborhoods and development patterns that reflect recent and anticipated market trends.
- The Fairfax Boulevard Corridor, including the Kamp Washington area, Northfax, and Fairfax Circle, will retain the bulk of the City's commercially designated property, consistent with previous comprehensive plans, existing development, and recommendations of the Transportation Plan.
- The majority of the Historic Downtown area has been designated Mixed Use to reflect the desired mix of land uses in that area.
- Much of the floodplain land has been designated Open Space—Conservation throughout the City in recognition of the need to limit development in these areas for environmental protection purposes. Other properties held by the City for purposes of protecting the environment of residential neighborhoods and business centers have also been designated in this category.

In addition to the general designations contained on the Future Land Use Map, the text below contains more specific recommendations for select areas within the City.

1. Old Town Fairfax: Historic Downtown & Transition District

Old Town Fairfax is a very special combined neighborhood, business center and preservation area. In response to this special nature, the Land Use Plan designates most of the properties located in the historic downtown as Mixed Use to reflect not only the existing land use but also the preferred diversity in land uses. Properties comprising the Transition District are designated the various land uses indicated on the Future Land Use Map and elsewhere in this text. The designation of these areas in the Historic District and the Transition Overlay District allows the City to review each project with respect to its compatibility with the Historic Downtown and its contribution to the overall "old town" concept. Old Town Fairfax should contain a variety of land uses, including retail shops, restaurants, offices, residential uses, shared or public parking facilities, and open spaces.

In order to maintain an area where patrons are encouraged to visit multiple businesses during a single trip, a diversity of retail and restaurant offerings should be strongly promoted. A mix of uses that leans heavily towards one particular type will not attract the breadth of visitors throughout the day and into the evening that give Old Town its vitality. The preferred mix of uses would include restaurants, retail, and personal services on the ground floor of buildings that are intermixed along street frontages with residential or office uses above.